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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 60/104 of 8 December 2005, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Commends* the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly and for its impartiality;
>
> "2. *Reiterates its demand* that Israel, the occupying Power, cooperate with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate;
>
> "3. *Deplores* those policies and practices of Israel that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, as reflected in the report of the Special Committee covering the reporting period;
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> "4. *Expresses grave concern* about the critical crisis situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, as a result of unlawful Israeli practices and measures, and especially condemns all Israeli settlement activities and the construction of the wall, as well as the excessive and indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population, including extrajudicial executions;

* A/61/150.

** The present document was submitted late so as to include the maximum number of replies from Governments.

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"5. *Requests* the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;

"6. *Also requests* the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

"7. *Further requests* the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners and detainees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

"8. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To provide the Special Committee with all necessary facilities, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;

(b) To continue to make available such additional staff as may be necessary to assist the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;

(c) To circulate regularly to Member States the periodic reports mentioned in paragraph 6 above;

(d) To ensure the widest circulation of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings, by all means available, through the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and, where necessary, to reprint those reports of the Special Committee that are no longer available;

(e) To report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the tasks entrusted to him in the present resolution;

"9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled 'Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories'."

2. This year, several impediments affected the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. As the Commission on Human Rights was replaced by the new Human Rights Council in March 2006, and pending the finalization of its own agenda, it was not possible for the Special Committee to attend the usual debate in the Commission on agenda items 5 and 8 devoted to the right of peoples to self-determination and the question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab Territories, including Palestine. Nevertheless, the Special Committee met in Geneva from 16 to 21 March 2006 to review its work and

make plans for its field visit to the Middle East, initially scheduled to take place in June 2006.

3. Owing to spending limitations affecting the regular budget, the Special Committee rescheduled its field visit to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic to 1-15 August 2006. However, the seriously deteriorating security situation in the region since July resulting in restrictions of movement and travel both for the Committee and the witnesses compelled the Special Committee to postpone its field visit. In taking this decision reluctantly, the Committee recognized the need to carry out its visit in a comprehensive manner and in an atmosphere conducive to the submission of a full report to the General Assembly, in accordance with its mandate.

4. The Special Committee instead held consultations in Geneva from 31 July to 2 August 2006 with a view to reviewing the situation and revising plans for its field visit to the three countries by mid-November 2006.

5. During its two sessions in Geneva, the Special Committee held consultations with relevant representatives of permanent missions, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as international non-governmental organizations.

6. Pursuant to paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 60/104, the activities described below were undertaken.

Department of Public Information

7. The Department of Public Information disseminated information on the work of the Special Committee during the period covering August 2005 to July 2006, using various means of information dissemination at its disposal.

8. The Meetings Coverage Section of the Department at Headquarters issued 14 press releases on the Special Committee during the reporting period — seven in English and seven in French — including the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee's consideration of the agenda item during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

9. The United Nations Website maintained the web page on the question of Palestine under the Global Issues page, with links to other pages, including the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) database.

10. The work of the Special Committee continued to be regularly featured on one of the most frequently visited parts of the United Nations website — the *UN News Centre* portal, including its Arabic language version.

11. United Nations Radio regularly covered various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and related issues in its news bulletins and current affairs magazines in the official and non-official languages.

12. The *UN Chronicle* (in the six official languages) and the *UN Chronicle Online* (in English and French) covered the work of the Special Committee in Issue 4, 2005, under their coverage of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

13. The Department, in cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, organized the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Moscow on 8 and 9 June 2006, at which the latest developments relating to the Middle East peace process, including the human rights situation, were discussed. The Department held an annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners, which included briefings on human rights and coverage of the work of the General Assembly relating to the question of Palestine.